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Advancing social justice in Europe and worldwide

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SOLIDAR Weekly Round Up 22-11-2013

Editorial by Conny Reuter

Beyond Elections and Manifestos

This week the EU has gained in certainty when it comes to its means with an agreement on the EU budget - which is still important in spite of the reduction - and the European Social Fund (ESF). Although we are not fully satisfied with the result of the ESF as, together with other civil society organisations, we were campaigning for an ESF of at least 25% of the Cohesion Policy Budget, we now have to start the next phase: the definition of priorities for the ESF in the Member States. Taking into account that the ESF is the most important tool for social inclusion, it will be necessary that our respective national members become active stakeholders in the design of the national priorities and programmes.

In addition, it is necessary to remind Members States that they have also agreed on the Europe 2020 Strategy and Education & Training 2020. To achieve the agreed targets within these strategies, CSOs need to be better involved in the design of National Reform Programmes and Country Specific Recommendations, developed within the European Semester. To that end, SOLIDAR will launch next Thursday in the European Parliament the **Social Progress Watch Initiative**. And mid-December the European Alliance of the European Year for Active Citizenship will present its policy recommendations as the result of the important work of more than 60 networks and 20 national coalitions.

We as civil society organisations also have to communicate about how we have contributed to the process and what we have achieved. When citizens are turning away from Europe, from the European institutions and the European elections, we have to tell them that by getting engaged and promoting civil dialogue at EU and national level, one can obtain and achieve results. We are part of a vibrant civil society that is everything but a puppet on a string.

React, act and impact! For social justice and change!

Conny Reuter, Secretary General

The Philippines: Update on Situation

In the immediate aftermath of typhoon Haiyan in The Philippines, SOLIDAR members and the Secretariat launched a series of **solidarity actions** throughout Europe. Three members: **SOLIDAR Suisse**, **ASB Germany** and **ASB Austria** also deployed missions to the affected regions. The first reports paint a grim picture; over 13.2 million people are affected, of whom over 4.4 million people are displaced from their homes. More than one million houses have been destroyed. The Eastern, Central and Western Visayas have been hit the hardest. Tacloban City, with a population of over 200,000 people, has been devastated and there is an almost total destruction in the coastal areas of Leyte Province. 628 schools are reported to be severely damaged, leaving children in a vulnerable state without places to go outside their families.

On the basis of these **first findings**, SOLIDAR Suisse will launch a first emergency response providing non-food items and shelter kits and in the second phase will focus on housing reconstruction projects, this will be done in **close cooperation** with other SOLIDAR members and LEARN in the Philippines.

The ITUC has taken over our **call for solidarity** and strongly backed this week the call of the Philippines government for urgent action to tackle climate change.

Social Affairs

European Semester 2014 Needs to Ensure Social Progress says new SOLIDAR briefing

The European Semester 2014 was officially kick-started in a meeting of European Affairs Ministers on Tuesday following the publication of the [Annual Growth Survey 2014](#) by the European Commission last week. For SOLIDAR, there is a need for policy change in order to reinforce social consolidation and increase social cohesion within and between EU Member States. Strengthening active inclusion and promoting quality employment by raising social standards in all Member States should be the priorities of the EU, in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy, highlights the new briefing paper "[European Semester 2014: Ensure Social Progress](#)". [Read more...](#)

ETUC Plan for Investment: Calling for Sustainable Growth and Decent Jobs

On 7 November, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) adopted a [plan for investment, sustainable growth and quality jobs](#) calling for a long-term recovery in Europe to restore solidarity and cohesion within and between Member States. SOLIDAR welcomes the plan as we see an urgent need for policy change away from policies encouraging unfair competition and lowering social standards, and towards social investment to reinforce social consolidation and cohesion in the EU. [Read more...](#)

International Cooperation

SOLIDAR Launches Global Policy Campaign to Promote Freedom of Association

Last week SOLIDAR launched its global policy campaign on [Freedom of Association](#) to promote freedom of peaceful assembly and association and support the construction of just and democratic societies worldwide. At an event in Aventure Cinema in Brussels, Director Ammar Aziz presented two documentaries, made in cooperation with the SOLIDAR and Global Network partner [Labour Education Foundation](#) – Silver Rose Award Winners 2011 – that highlight encroachments of freedom of association for workers in Pakistan (see [video](#)), followed by a look more specifically at the life and struggle of home-based women bangle-makers (see "[Daughters of a lesser God](#)"). [Read more...](#)

SOLIDAR Seminar in Marrakesh: Building Capacity on EU Policy Monitoring

On 15 November SOLIDAR organised a networking seminar in Marrakesh that gathered some 20 organisations from civil society and the labour movement, all partners of SOLIDAR members involved in the Cooperation Network "[Social Justice in the Middle East and North Africa](#)". Also present at the event were local staff from SOLIDAR members [ISCOD](#), [ISCOS](#) and [Alianza por la Solidaridad](#). "*The meeting was an excellent opportunity to strengthen the network at national level and to evaluate EU policies towards the Middle East and North Africa, and Morocco in particular*", said Conny Reuter SOLIDAR Secretary General. "*There is a real need of involving the emerging progressive civil society in the transition processes in the region to ensure the construction of just and democratic societies worldwide.*" [Read more...](#)

Lifelong Learning

ETUI Education Day 2013: Train for Social Europe

This week SOLIDAR participated in the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) [Education Day and Conference 2013](#), on the theme Train for Social Europe. The conference highlighted that in times of economic and social crisis, it becomes increasingly important to strengthen democratic and political learning to empower the workers' movement to stress that there are alternatives to austerity, the erosion of working conditions and lowering of wages.

SOLIDAR, the ILO International Training Centre and ETUI education are currently working together to establish a community of good practices promoting the exchange of new methodologies between workers' and trade unionists education organisations. [Read more...](#)

Erasmus+ Adopted

This week, the European Parliament approved the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sports [Erasmus+](#). The new programme for 2014-2020 will succeed the current Lifelong Learning Programme, and after being adopted by the Council next month, will be operationalised in January 2014. SOLIDAR, together with other stakeholders, was closely following the process around the new programme and proposed amendments aiming to strengthen lifelong learning opportunities for all, maintaining specific allocation for adult learning, and recognising non-formal and informal learning.

The new programme will have a budget of €14.7 billion that will be divided between three main targets: learning opportunities for individuals, establishing partnerships between stakeholders, and for reforms and modernisation of education and training.

Members News

Spain

In the framework of the European Development Days, **Alianza por la Solidaridad** invites you to the Round Table "[ICT 4 social change](#)" on 27 November and to an informal [networking reception](#) on 26 November in Brussels.

UK

CSV is supporting the Campaign for Youth Social Action's goal of doubling the number of young people participating in social action to over 50% by 2020. The [Step Up To Serve](#) campaign aims to engage an additional 1.7 million young people in social action for the first time by 2020.

Partners News

Finance Watch [welcomes](#) the European Parliament's vote on protecting retail investors and calls for KID proposal to be fast-tracked.

PSI/IUF/EMHRN/ITUC

Join the [call for international action](#) in solidarity with the Algerian trade union SNAPAP and with the SNAPAP President, Rachid Malaoui, who was removed from his post at the University of Continuous Education because of his trade union

activities and his commitment to defending human rights.

Agenda

26-27 November: Third Annual Convention of the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, Brussels

27 November: European Year for Citizens Alliance 2013 high-level event, European Parliament

28 November: Social Progress Watch Initiative launch event, European Parliament

28 November – **Long-term care in Europe. The way forward by coordination and integration**, conference organized by MEP Heinz K. Becker

5 December - **Go Green, Be Social**– Spring Alliance event

12-13 December: European Year for Citizens 2013 closing conference, Vilnius (Lithuania)

SOLIDAR is a European network of 60 NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the concerns of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the policy sectors social affairs, international cooperation and lifelong learning. For more info www.solidar.org

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